

Experimental Film: History and Aesthetics
Winter 89-90
9-11 TuTh
325 Annie May Swift

Chuck Kleinhans
office: 316 AMS, 491-2255
office hours: 3-4 TuTh and by appointment
TA: Dave Douglas

enrollment limit: 35; permission of instructor required. Students must attend first class. Prerequisite: undergrads RTF B20; grads permission of instructor; grads must preregister; no late adds.

An introduction to the history and aesthetics of the film avant garde from the 1920s in Europe to contemporary US and Canadian work. Emphasis is on exploring the range of experimental film practice and developing critical and aesthetic concepts for discussing avant garde work.

The course combines screenings, lectures, discussions, readings, and off campus screenings. Films are the main texts for the course. Films will be screened in class and cannot be seen at other times. Thus attendance is important and will help determine the grade. Assigned work includes 5 reports on field work in Chicago's experimental film and video scene and adjoining art world, a midterm and a final. Grad students will do additional reading.

Required texts (available at Norris Center Store)
James, David E. Allegories of Cinema
Vogel, Amos. Film as a Subversive Art
Sitney, P. Adam. Avant Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism
Recommended text (req. for grads)
Sitney, P. Adam. Visionary Film (2nd ed.)
Additional readings will be available at CopyCat

Th Jan 4

course administration
intro
Mothlight (Stan Brakhage) Canyon
Wavelength (Michael Snow) CIC

Tu Jan 9

Report (Bruce Conner) MOMA, Canyon
Scorpio Rising (Kenneth Anger) CIC
read: Vogel to p. 44.

Th Jan 11

Meshes of the Afternoon (Maya Deren/Alexander Hammid) NU
Window Water Baby Moving (Stan Brakhage) Canyon
read: Vogel, 45-75; 258-262; Sitney, 120-128

Tu Jan 16

Blacktop (Charles and Ray Eames) MOMA
Bridges Go Round (Shirley Clarke) (2 versions on one reel) MOMA
Analogies (Peter Rose) NU
Fuses (Carolee Schneeman) Canyon
read: Vogel, 76-118

Th Jan 18

Entr'acte (Rene Clair/Francis Picabia) NU
Emak Bakia (Man Ray) MOMA
The Lead Shoes (Sidney Peterson) Canyon
read: Vogel, 119-158; Sitney 74-79

Tu Jan 23

Ritual in Transfigured Time (Deren) MOMA
Fuji (Robert Breer) MOMA
Syntagma (Valie Export, 1983, 17 min.) Foreign Images
read: Vogel, 159-234; Sitney 60-73

Th Jan 25

Pull My Daisy (Robert Frank, Alfred Leslie) NY Coop, ? MOMA
Ode to the New Prehistory (Peggy Ahwesh, 8mm, color sound 22 min, 1984-87. Canyon
read: Vogel, 235-304

Tu Jan 30

*****in class midterm exam*****
The Bed (James Broughton) Canyon, NY coop
5:10 to Dreamland (Bruce Conner) ?Canyon
Kustom Kar Kommandos (Kenneth Anger) Canyon
read: Vogel, 305 to end; Sitney, 80-82

Th Feb 1

Un Chien Andalou (Luis Bunuel/Salvador Dali) NU
The Seashell and the Clergyman (Germaine Dulac) MOMA
read: Sitney 31-50

Th Feb 6

Hans Richter Program (from Cecile Starr)
Rhythmn 21
Diagonal Symphony (Viking Eggeling)
Rhythm 23
Film Study
Ghosts Before Breakfast
Inflation
Everything Turns
Race Symphonie
Two-Penny Magic

Th Feb 8

Dreams that Money Can Buy (Richter, 1947, 80 min.)MOMA

Tu Feb 13

special class: evening screening in AMS auditorium 7-10.30
Jeanne Dielmann, (Chantal Ackermann) CIC

Th Feb 15

Money (Henry Hills, 15 min.) Canyon? NY Coop?
Coalfields (Bill Brand, 39 min.) Canyon
The Right Side of My Brain (Richard Kern/Lydia Lunch) (8mm-video) CK, pers. copy

Tu Feb 20

Nos. 1-5 (Harry Smith) MOMA? NY Coop?

Marie Menken program MOMA? NY Coop?
Visual Variations on Noguchi

Dwightiana
Arabesque for Kenneth Anger
Notebook

Th Feb 22

What is a Man? (Sara Arledge) Canyon
My Name is Oona (Gunvor Nelson) Canyon
Hapax Legomena: Critical Mass (Hollis Frampton) Canyon
Speak Body (Kay Armatage) ? Canadian Filmmakers?

Tu Feb 27

Transitions (Barbara Sternberg)
Seeing in the Rain (Gallagher)
Gertrude (Armatage)

Th Mar 1

*****grad book report due
Mr. Hayashi (Bruce Baillie) canyon
A Hurrah for Soldiers (Baillie)canyon
Mass for the Dakota Sioux (Baillie)canyon
All My Life (Bruce Baillie)canyon
To Parsifal (Baillie)canyon

Tu Mar 6

Yellow Horse (Baillie)canyon
Termination (Baillie)canyon
Still Life (Baillie)canyon
Valentin de las Sierras (Baillie)canyon
Castro Street (Baillie)canyon

Th Mar 8

At Land (Maya Deren) Moma
Roslyn Romance (Baillie) canyon

Wed Mar 14 12-2 Final Exam

Assignments. All students are required to turn in five reports of about 500-750 words on outside screening events. Two must be turned in before the midterm. The reports may be subjective or objective, concentrate on the overall experience or just one film/tape, etc. There will be a list of suitable screenings/events posted outside of Chuck's office. The purpose of these fieldwork assignments is to give students additional screenings and experiences in Chicago's avant garde art and media community. Undergrads turn in reports to TA; grads to Chuck. 25% of final grade for undergrads, 20% for grads.

Grad students have an additional assignment (10% of final grade), which is to read a book and prepare for distribution to the entire class a five page (1500 words) report which presents a description of the contents and form/style and which discusses the book in a way to be useful and interesting to the undergrads in the course. Due Mar 1. Choose from the following list:

Sitney, P. Adam, ed. Film Culture Reader
Tyler, Parker. Underground Film
Youngblood, Gene. Expanded Cinema.
Stauffacher, Frank. Art in Cinema.
Curtis, David. Experimental Cinema.
Mekas, Jonas. Movie Journal.
Dwoskin, Steve. Film Is...
Hanhardt, John, ed. A History of the American Avant-garde Cinema
Curtis, David. Experimental Film.
Battcock, Gregory, ed. The New American Cinema.
Renan, Sheldon. An Introduction to the American Underground Film.

Ehrenstein, David. Film: The Front Line--1984
Rosenbaum, Jonathan. Film: The Front Line--1983
James, David. Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties
Scott Macdonald, ??: Interviews with Filmmakers

Exams. The midterm will count 35% of the final grade and concentrate on writing a short essay on each of three films to be shown in class. The final (40% of final grade) will be in two parts: writing an essay after seeing an unannounced film (one hour). The second half is over the entire course--screenings, readings, lectures and discussion

How to get to the outside screenings (phone first!):

Experimental Film Coalition. Randolph Street Gallery. 666-7737. 756 N. Milwaukee Ave. Drive: Ridge to Ashland, Ashland to Milwaukee/Division/Ashland. S. on Milwaukee, about 2 blocks south of Chicago Ave. Parking on the street and across the street. El/bus. Chicago el stop is closed at night. Best bet is el to the Loop, then Milwaukee Ave. bus to gallery (phone CTA for exact info). Typical of artists as the shock troops of gentrification, this is part of a new cluster of galleries in not a great neighborhood; try to make the first show if you're alone or on public transportation (there are usually several folks at the bus stop heading back to the Loop after the show; if the wind is right, you can smell the fresh bread from the bakery a couple of blocks away).

Chicago Filmmakers (?? West Belmont, 329-0854) . Drive: Outer drive to Belmont, head west. El: to Belmont, walk or bus west. This neighborhood is quite busy at night and fairly safe. Local attractions: music clubs, bars, range of restaurants on/around Belmont (Ann Sather's, Mohty Motal, Mama Desta's, etc.), east and west of the el and in environs.

Film Center, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Columbus and Jackson, 443-3737. (behind the Museum) Drive: Outer Drive to Monroe, west to Columbus Drive, park on Columbus or Monroe St. garage (offers escort to car at night). El: exit at Jackson, east to Columbus (over the IC tracks). The school has an ok cafeteria and machines. Grant Park can be a fairly deserted area at night, be alert. The Film Center is on the second floor; screenings in the video space are in the basement.

Facets Multimedia. 1517 W. Fullerton. 281-4114. Drive: Outer Drive to Fullerton, west to Facets. Or Ridge to Ashland, Ashland to Fullerton, east one block. El/bus: exit at Fullerton. Take Fullerton bus West. This is a gentrifying neighborhood, with a few restaurants and bars, mostly on Fullerton, but if you go back east to Halsted/Lincoln/Fullerton there are a lot of live music bars, restaurants, etc. NB. Facets is notorious for having the worst projection in Chicago; expect anything, you won't be too surprized (but everyone in the media community has horror stories). They do have an outstanding selection of video tapes for rental/sale--lots of European films, etc. One of the very best video rental places in the country.

and Center for New Television (, 565-1787)

read: Sitney 87-109A Criical Cinema tracks). The school has a ion in Chicago; expect anything; you won't be too surpris (will arrive late)

read: Vogel to p. 44; Sitney 172-189; Sitney 190-198; course pack: Artaud, scenario of Seashell; Berger, "The Moment of Cubism" read: James to p. 28

read: James to p 57

read: James to 119

read: James to 165

; James to 236 read: James to 280; Sitney 264-280